423 will, and the new occupant cannot make the slightest protest.

It should be pointed out, however, that since land is most often abandoned because it was thought to be unproductive or haunted, there is rarely a claim to it by a former owner. In any event the matter is settled by the interested parties. The local administration and the canton chief rarely intervene in such cases.

Owners' rights over fruit trees in cultivated fields. Donsé 423 or néré [locust bean] trees whose fruits contain a yellowish, sweet 263 powder that is edible and [244] whose seeds are used to make soumbala, a fetid condiment much prized by the natives, remain the exclusive property of the former occupant. On the other hand, the tamsé (karite tree) belong to the new owner.

423 This is because the karite tree is found almost everywhere in the bush, while the néré is less common.

Rights of the chiefs over cultivated land. As a general rule, 425 since the principle of right by possession is honored among the 423 Mossi, a canton chief will not confiscate without reason cultivated land belonging to one of his subjects if the land has always been occupied by the occupant's grandparents.

When the land is unoccupied, however, or newly occupied, the canton chief may, by virtue of his absolute authority over his territory, take possession, and the new owner may not claim any compensation.

Field Work

241 In principle, a family field is held in common. When a woman 562 grows old, however, she no longer does field work with her hus- 595 band. She has her own field and feeds herself as best she may, since her husband pays no further attention to her and no longer supports her. The work is done by the family as a group, and the size of the field varies with the size of the family.

241 Early in the morning, usually before [245] sunrise, the head ●512 of the family wakens the young people. They go out to the field, which may be five to ten kilometers away. Around ten o'clock, the women bring the remains of last night's sagbo or, lacking that, some millet flour which is taken in water.

241 At noon (wend'to souka, "the middle of the day") the family
512 rests in the shade of a tree. There are always some fruit trees in every field. Work is resumed at about two in the afternoon. At five the women return home to prepare food, and the men stop work at nightfall.

241 The sisoaga. When the family fields are too extensive to be
476 cultivated without help, all the able-bodied young men in the village are called to help with the weeding.

At such a time the head of the family gives several baskets of sprouted millet to his wives to make large quantities of dam, millet beer. He also orders them to prepare sagbo (millet cakes).

On the day set for the work, the young men go to the fields, where their enthusiasm is aroused by singing and the beating of drums. For their work they receive sagbo and dam. This is what is known as the sisoaga.

It is a kind of mutual aid, and without this indispensable system of solidarity, many fields would remain uncultivated.

[573] It should be noted, finally, that when a person falls [246] ill during the winter, his friends arrange to cultivate his fields, sometimes without any pay and simply out of a sense of solidarity.

241 Farm implements. As is the case everywhere in French West Africa, the natives have only the most primitive implements. Among the Mossi these include: the wanka or kounri, a hoe or Bambara daba to cultivate the soil; the sitoaga (small pickaxe) for sowing; and the laré (ax) to clear the site of brush and shrubs.

463 Other types of work. Aside from work in the fields, everyone goes about his own affairs. Some make baskets, hampers, and fans, while others weave cotton strips. It is perhaps of some
[564 interest to note that there is no caste distinction among the Mossi,
326] except for the blacksmiths; each person may practice the trade that suits him. This is why shoemakers mostly come from among the nakomsé (descendants of naba).

Food Crops

241 The principal foods grown by the Mossi are as follows.
Kazouf (small white or gray millet).

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All [351] these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew [273 415] millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. [591] Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in [361] another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons 342 place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, [239] and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwell- [559] ings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the base- [617] ment. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of [525] the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

721 These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in [721] the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake [701] Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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342 592 [264] received, gossip exchanged, and social and ceremonial obligations discussed in its shade. Here, also, the men of the lineage take their meals, brought out to them from the kitchens of their wives and set before them by their sons, who first attend their fathers and then dine on what remains.

592 252 [512] A few paces away is the grinding platform (*nere*) where the women gather to prepare the grain for their families' meals. This great circular mud table, some twenty feet in diameter, is raised about three feet from the ground. Its surface is beaten hard and worked over with cinders and manure to make it rainproof. Each woman has her assigned place at this platform where she keeps her pestle and where she stations herself at dawn and again at dusk to grind her millet and learn the news of the day.

592 Frequently found at the outer perimeter of the dwelling of the Mossi kin group is the house of the son of a lineage woman who has returned from his father's household to live in the benevolent presence of his mother's family, with whom he enjoys an especially permissive relationship. The house set aside for the residence of the young unmarried men of the lineage is also located on the outer edge of the compound dwelling.

555 184 A recent addition to the traditional pattern of village organization described above is the independent households of socially ambitious individuals who have chosen to separate themselves from the residences of their lineages in order to profit from their own economic or religious enterprises. Many have become independently wealthy through successful commercial ventures; others, as a result of conversion to Islam, have gained prestige through religious authority and wealth through the tuition and services provided by the Koranic students. Often these people are much younger than their lineage elders, not in line for the inheritance of political or religious authority through traditional channels, and unwilling either to accept the authority of their seniors or to share economically with the less prosperous members of their lineages. They are deviants, in conflict with the communal patterns of consumption and with the emphasis on accepting established authority which characterises the traditional social organization of the Mossi.

THE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

613 476 293 Much agricultural endeavor is necessarily co-operative. Each farmer is dependent on the assistance of his kinsmen to get his fields seeded, cultivated, and harvested in the short time during which each of these operations must take place. However, the yield from his field remains his own, to be shared only with his own wives and children. Members of the lineage also work in the fields under the specific control of the lineage elder. Although the harvest from these fields is stored in the granary

262 [i.e. at a raw shelter in the entrance-way. — Analyst]

144 This is all we shall say by way of introduction to our study of Mossi customs. The main point to be remembered is that the bulk of the present Mossi population is not of "pure" origin, but results from a mixture between the Mossi conquerors and antecedent primitive groups.

000 Let us now turn our attention to work, and first of all to cultivation. We shall study the various types of labor in greater detail than we did so far in relation to the populations previously studied, and the reader will get a better idea of the work performed by the Blacks in these regions.

243 Millet is the most important item of cultivation among the Mossi, who call it ki. They cultivate various kinds of millet, and we shall take them up one by one.

First of all, the ordinary small millet, which is most widely cultivated. It is the Bambara sanio or Mossi kasui. It requires good black soil with low sand content.

243 242 Let us make the general statement that the Mossi, whenever they can, change plots every four years. That is, they clear a new field or take over an old one which has lain fallow. If they have little land, they cultivate the same plot indefinitely. In other words, they may till the same field for some twenty years.

243 When a new plot is cleared, the clearing is done in March or April. The head of the soukala goes to work with all his men. Daba /hoe/ and hatchets are used to cut down the trees. The women come along, but only to serve drink to the men, because they do not take part in the clearing.

[461 512] The workers go into the bush in the morning and remain there all day. They rest around the middle of the day (from noon to /467/ two or three o'clock), and then take up their work again until sundown. The women return home first to prepare dinner, and then the men follow. After the clearing proper has been completed, all that was torn up from the ground is gathered in a heap and set afire. The ashes are left on the soil to fertilize it. It should be noted that the roots of the trees are not removed. The trees, in fact, are merely cut about one meter from the ground, so that the field is dotted with stumps. Sometimes, instead of cutting down a tree, a small fire of branches and dry leaves is lit at its base and the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this sybolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Yatenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

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765 and districts were present to honor him. This being completed, the
602 *griots* are paid, everyone rises and shouts *Ne Wardo* (the salutation at
443 funerals), and that part of the funeral ceremony during which a man
[827] takes leave of the market community is concluded. Now his relatives, descendants and friends all return to the market, whose sights and sounds make it an integral part of the life cycle of the Mossi—the one institution of their society in which almost everyone participates actively.

443 Preparation for a market day, especially the tri-weekly Friday
512 market or *Raga kasanga*, usually begins on Thursday. This day is
571 characterized by a great deal of activity: preparing the commodities which are to be sold the next day, washing body and clothes, and combing hair. The women who prepare the beer and fried foods work late into the night preparing their wares, and a visit to the homes of the
[885] *griots* finds them preparing their drums. The little boys who go to the roadside to chant Moslem prayers to the passers-by, and the little girls who sell water to these strangers redouble their efforts until late on Thursday night to get enough money to buy presents in the market the next day. Finally, when it is quite late and the beer-making fires are out, everyone retires until the morning of the market.

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday the market is deserted except for a leper who sweeps out the stalls of the sellers in return for bits of food or presents of money. Looking at the empty stalls, one has a certain amount of difficulty imagining that this spot will be crowded with human beings five hours hence. But one is also conscious of the fact that even at this early hour scores of persons have already left their homes in distant villages and are on their way to market loaded with prod-
[402] uce and with high hopes for the day. About 9:00 A.M. the first women arrive, balancing net-covered bundles on their heads, and take their positions in the various sections of the market with either face or back pointing to the direction from which they came. By 9:30 A.M. the butchers have arrived with their bleating sheep and goats and an
[270] aged cow. The first beer sellers have also arrived and are giving "sips" to men before they settle down to sustained drinking.

The pace of the market quickens about 10:30, and in the distance the first tap of the Bindere's drum resounds. All of a sudden, the market seems to have become a giant magnet, drawing long lines of
[854] people towards it along every path and from every direction. Women dressed in brightly colored print cloths and dresses, with babies straddling their backs and the inevitable bundles on their head, saunter into their places. Young children run ahead of their mothers or stumble behind them. Those vendors of European products who customarily transport their goods in boxes on bicycles arrive in the

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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga*, the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

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their "evil" and "non-evil" ways. A little later the young men who possess bicycles may be seen suddenly hurrying to avoid the other *nansara*, this time, the French official, who comes into the market to apprehend those individuals who have not bought a bicycle license. All the *nansara* know that the market is the best place to find a Mossi.

Towards 3:00 P.M. the matrons in the market, having sold most of their own goods and bought those which they need, make the last rounds to see whether there are any bargains to be had. In their rounds the women may be badgered by sons, daughters and other relatives, but seldom by husbands, for extra francs to buy kolas or tobacco to bridge them over the two non-market days. Or the women themselves may seek out their male relatives to buy kola or goods, from the stranger who is making the rounds of the local markets. By this time of day the market place is emptying—at first this happens so imperceptibly that one does not notice it. However, by 4:00 P.M. a mass exodus begins as women collect their little children, hitch their babies on their backs, place baskets on their head and set out in the direction of their own villages or to the villages of relatives where they plan to spend time. By this hour also the Bendere are drunk, and for an extra calabash of beer are willing to recount genealogies for which, if sober, they would demand a sheep or goat.

Evening finds the market deserted except for scavenging dogs which hunt the scraps of food dropped by the now departed human beings. The market place finally falls silent, until late at night passing migrants retire there to sleep. These persons leave the market place at dawn to buy food from the women whose hawking cries herald another day of roadside commerce. The women use the profit from this trade to buy goods on the following market days.

[pp. 279–738 not processed]